

What is claimed is:

1. An articulating guidewire, comprising:  
an elongated core wire having a longitudinal axis, a proximal end and a distal end;  
an actuatable stop disposed at the distal end of said core wire, said actuatable stop moveable between a collapsed position and an expanded position;  
an actuator couple to the stop, said actuator moveable between a first position and a second position to move the stop between the collapsed position and the expanded position; and  
a filter disposed on the core wire.
2. The guidewire of claim 1, wherein said actuatable tip comprises a tubular member having a proximal end and a distal end.
3. The guidewire of claim 2, wherein the distal section of said tubular member includes a plurality of circumferentially disposed openings adapted to permit a plurality of struts disposed therebetween to expand in an outward direction.
4. The guidewire of claim 2, wherein the inner diameter of said tubular member is substantially similar to the outer diameter of the core wire.
5. The guidewire of claim 2, wherein the inner diameter of said tubular member is larger than the outer diameter of the core wire.

6. The guidewire of claim 1, further comprising a locking mechanism adapted to prevent relative motion between the actuatable stop and the core wire.

7. The guidewire of claim 6, wherein the locking mechanism comprises an enlarged outer diameter portion disposed on the core wire.

8. The guidewire of claim 6, wherein the locking mechanism comprises an enlarged outer diameter portion disposed on the core wire corresponding in size and shape to a reduced inner diameter portion disposed on the actuatable stop.

9. The guidewire of claim 6, wherein the locking mechanism comprises a locking hub disposed about a proximal portion of the core wire.

10. An articulating guidewire, comprising:  
an elongated core wire having a longitudinal axis, a proximal end and a distal end;  
an actuatable stop disposed at the distal end of said core wire, said actuatable stop moveable between a collapsed position and an expanded position;  
an actuator disposable about the core wire, said actuator having a proximal end and a distal end; and  
a filter disposed on the core wire.

11. The guidewire of claim 10, wherein said actuatable stop comprises a spring coil.

12. The guidewire of claim 10, wherein said actuatable stop comprises a spring coil helically disposed about the core wire.

13. The guidewire of claim 10, wherein said actuatable stop comprises a polymeric tube.

14. The guidewire of claim 13, wherein said polymeric tube is accordion-shaped.

15. The guidewire of claim 10, wherein said actuatable stop comprises a mesh sleeve.

16. The guidewire of claim 15, wherein said mesh sleeve comprises Dacron.

17. The guidewire of claim 10, wherein the inner diameter of the actuator is substantially similar to the outer diameter of the core wire.

18. The guidewire of claim 10, wherein the inner diameter of the actuator is larger than the outer diameter of the core wire.

19. The guidewire of claim 10, further comprising a locking mechanism adapted to prevent proximal motion of the actuator relative to the core wire.

20. The guidewire of claim 19, wherein the locking mechanism comprises an enlarged outer diameter portion disposed on the core wire.

21. The guidewire of claim 19, wherein the locking mechanism comprises an enlarged outer diameter portion disposed on the core wire corresponding in size and shape to a reduced inner diameter portion disposed on the actuator.

22. The guidewire of claim 19, wherein the locking mechanism comprises a locking hub disposed about a proximal portion of the core wire.

23. A method for placing an articulating guidewire in the vasculature, comprising the steps of:

providing an articulating guidewire comprising an elongated core wire having a longitudinal axis, a proximal end and a distal end; and an actuatable stop disposed at the distal end of the core wire, said actuatable stop moveable between a collapsed position and an expanded position;

inserting the guidewire into the lumen of a blood vessel;

positioning a distal portion of the guidewire beyond a lesion or other protrusion within the body;

actuating the actuatable stop from the collapsed position to the expanded position;

and

advancing a filter on the guidewire to the stop.

24. The method in accordance with claim 23, further comprising the step of advancing an intravascular device along the core wire until the intravascular device abuts the outwardly expanded stop.

25. A method for placing an articulating guidewire in the vasculature, comprising the steps of:

providing an articulating guidewire comprising an elongated core wire having a longitudinal axis, a proximal end and a distal end; an actuatable stop disposed at the distal end of the core wire, said actuatable stop moveable between a collapsed position and an expanded position; and an actuator moveable about the core wire, said actuator having a proximal end and a distal end;

inserting the guidewire into the lumen of a blood vessel;

positioning a distal portion of the guidewire beyond a lesion or other protrusion within the body;

actuating the stop from the collapsed position to the expanded position; and

advancing a filter on a guidewire.

26. The method in accordance with claim 25, further comprising the step of advancing an intravascular device along the guidewire until the intravascular device abuts the outwardly expanded stop.